

Living City

4 1983
VOLUME 22
APRIL



MAY 29, 1983
NORTH AMERICAN
FOCOLARE DAY

THE COUNCIL
TWENTY YEARS LATER

Easter
THE FULLNESS OF JOY
A meditation



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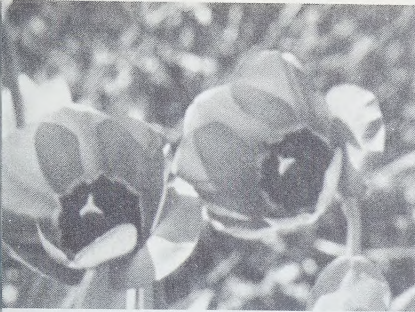
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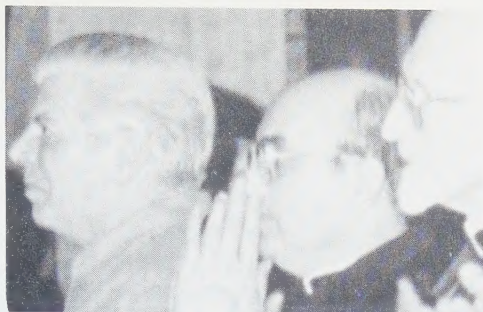
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A glance to the past to gain courage for the future

compiled by Oreste Paliotti

Many of our readers will recall the invitation which Chiara Lubich addressed to the members of the Focolare Movement and those associated with it in 1981. She proposed that we make of our lives a journey towards sanctity, the ultimate goal of every Christian; and that we do so not alone, but together with all our neighbors. It was to be a "holy journey," therefore, on which we would move ahead together day by day.

Since then, many others have undertaken this demanding yet fascinating endeavor; they have joined all those in the Movement in living out its spirituality — unity in love. It is a unity among all people, and with God, the unity toward which the world of today is tending, notwithstanding unfavorable evidence to the contrary. This same unity, Pope Paul VI has said, "generates the presence of Jesus in our midst."

It is our impression that all over the world, wherever any members or groups belonging to the Focolare Movement are found, the year 1982 was characterized by a deeper understanding and experience of this presence of the Risen Christ among his followers. This fact became very evident through contacts with people of various nations, cultures and religions, in the course of the trip which Chiara Lubich and other leaders of the Movement took at the

beginning of the year. Their travels brought them to the Far East and to Australia, where they visited the Focolare communities which have come to life in those distant lands. It was likewise apparent later on in the year, on the occasion of important ecumenical meetings which strengthened the bonds among the members of many different Christian denominations.

This presence of Jesus in the midst was also a key feature of that extraordinary event which brought together 7,000 priests and religious associated with the Movement. They assembled before the Pope to reflect on the priest as a "man of dialogue," one who takes it upon himself to

work as an untiring promoter of unity.

Mariapolises¹ took place all over the world, conveying this message of unity to a vast number of people.

"This particular presence of Jesus is the characteristic contribution of our Movement," Chiara reminded the Swiss Focolare community, meeting in Payerne last September. "We need this presence of the Risen Lord which mutual love brings about in order to feel the life of the early Christians pulsating, at least a little, within our Churches; in order to see families, so often broken apart, come together again.

(Continued on page 4)





For the Focolare Movement, the year 1982 could be defined as "The Hour of Asia." From mid-December 1981 until February 1982, Chiara Lubich and several other leaders of the Movement traveled throughout Australia and the Far East. In the course of their journey they made the following important stops: *Tokyo*, where on December 28, 1981 there was a historic meeting with 10,000 leaders of the lay Buddhist movement, the Rissho Kosei-kai, and with its president, Nikkyo Niwano; *Seoul*, (the photo left shows a group of Korean Gen 3²); *Hong Kong*, located at the gates of great China; *Manila*, in the Philippines. (The photo above shows Chiara Lubich with some members of the Focolare Community of Tagaytay); *Melbourne*, Australia (the photo at right shows some members of the Australian Focolare community which includes New Zealanders, Tasmanians and Polynesians as well as Australians); and finally *Bangkok*, in Thailand.



(Continued from page 2)

"We need the spirit of the Risen Lord among us in order to see the various social spheres renewed; in order to give our own contribution to the flourishing of those 'flower beds' of the Catholic Church — the religious orders and congregations; in order to give greater credibility to its structures, the parishes and dioceses; in order to contribute to the unification of Christians, both with one another and within their individual Churches: in order to collaborate in a useful way with all people of good will."

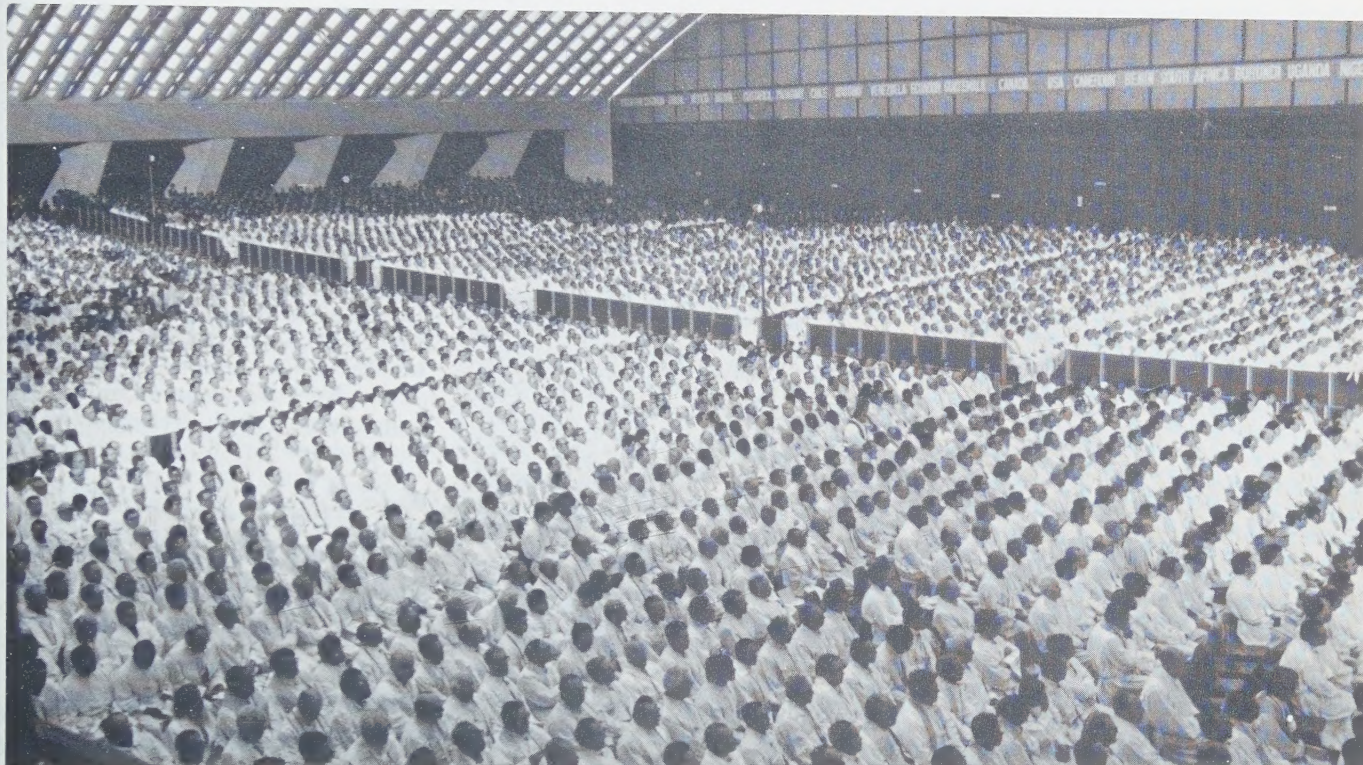
And so, as we glance back to the past, we gain new courage to continue striving for an always greater unity.

In February, forty-three bishops, friends of the Focolare Movement, gathered at the Mariapolis Center of Rocca di Papa for their customary annual meeting, the sixth of its kind. They came from eighteen different nations in South America, Asia, Africa, Europe and the Middle East. The theme of their convention was Unity, and it was lived by the bishops in attendance in an atmosphere of warm fraternity.

In a special audience with them at Castelgandolfo, the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II stressed this very same "living collegiality" which is very dear to his own heart. In the photo below, Pope John Paul II pauses to greet the bishops.

The first International Congress for Priests and Religious associated with the Focolare Movement took place in the Vatican's Pope Paul VI Audience Hall on April 30. Among the more than 7,000 participants there were members of several different Christian denominations. The theme of the gathering, "The Priest Today, the Religious Today" was a timely one, particularly relevant in this post-Vatican II period. Chiara Lubich opened the Congress with an address to all the participants. In his homily during Mass, the Holy Father stressed the fundamental principles of the spirituality of unity as a basis for priestly life. The photo at right shows the concelebration with the Holy Father, with Cardinal Opilio Rossi and twenty-one bishops. It has been called the largest Eucharistic concelebration in the history of the Church.





Each year, the Mariapolises taking place all over the world (usually during the summer) grow in number. They offer thousands of people the opportunity to experience the spirituality and life of the Movement. To the right is a picture taken during the afternoon of games at the Mariapolis of Alfred, New York, and below another moment of the Mariapolis. Four Mariapolises took place this year. As a consequence of several trips to Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, a fifth Mariapolis is planned for next July in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.





From the first to the fifth of September, the 87th Katholikentag, a traditional biennial convention promoted by German Catholics, took place in Dusseldorf. Chiara Lubich, who had been invited to speak at the convention, addressed the public on two separate occasions, each time speaking to about 7,000 people. On September 3, she presented the spirituality of the Focolare Movement; the following day she opened a round-table discussion, ecumenical in nature, with a brief discourse on unity. Her words were warmly welcomed by all those present who for the most part were young, both Catholics and Evangelicals. In the photo at the left we see a glimpse of the modern structures which hosted the more than 100,000 visitors in the course of the 5-day Katholikentag.



Several important steps along the way to full union with the members of other Churches: Centro Uno³ organized a convention which took place in Rocca di Papa on the week after Easter. It was attended by Anglicans, Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians and members of the United Reformed Church. Soon afterwards, on September 19, Chiara Lubich visited the Pan-Orthodox Center established by Patriarch Athenagoras I at Chambesey near Geneva, in Switzerland. On that occasion, after a solemn liturgy in the main Church, she delivered an address which dealt with Jesus' presence in the midst of Christians united in his name and the ecumenical consequences that this implies. The photo at left shows the warm farewell given Chiara Lubich by Metropolit Damaskinos, director of the Center.



A year of anniversaries. In November the XX Anniversary of the Focolare Movement in North America was celebrated in New York with a series of events. **RIGHT:** A crowd of 2,000 attended the Mass celebrated on this occasion in Saint Patrick's Cathedral by Cardinal Cooke, as main celebrant, and 32 bishops and priests.



Gen Verde — Gen Rosso. Both musical groups have recently visited North America. The Gen Verde (below) in November 1981, on the occasion of the XX Anniversary of the Movement; the Gen Rosso (below right) in the Fall of 1982 with a long tour of the continent. Both groups will return in the future.



In Third World nations, the commitment of local Focolare communities to share whatever they have with those in need is expressed in very practical terms. In war-torn Lebanon, for instance, it takes the form of solidarity with those who have lost their homes, possessions and relatives. The events of the war have strengthened these bonds. In the photo at the left we see an abandoned mountain chapel which was converted into a dormitory to provide shelter for a group of refugees.



The way of life common to the Focolare Movement has given rise to a desire for permanent and visible expressions of its experience. The Movement's small cities located in Europe, Africa and South America were founded in response to this need. The newest of these cities, Montet, is located in the Canton of Fribourg in Switzerland. The photo above shows an aggregate view of the city's center which includes pre-existing buildings built by the Salvatorian Fathers who formerly owned the area and adjoining land. Inaugurated in September of 1982, Montet is the site of annual courses and prolonged meetings which constitute a veritable "school of life." All of the participants in these sessions engage in some form of work while they remain in Montet because this aspect of daily life is regarded as an irreplaceable means of strengthening human relationships and increasing social awareness.

New Focolare Centers. Three exceptions have been made to the decision of not opening new centers for this year, but strengthening instead the existing ones. Focolare Centers have been opened in Bombay, India (women); Oslo, Norway (men); and Washington, D.C. (women).



ABOVE and LEFT: Also this year the international school located in the small city of Loppiano, where the future focolarini receive formation in the spirituality of unity, welcomed new arrivals from Europe, Asia, Africa, North and South America and Australia.

- 1) Summer gathering of the Focolare Movement.
- 2) See inside back cover.
- 3) Centro Uno (Center for Unity) is the ecumenical office in Rome of the Focolare Movement.

SPECIAL EVENT

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE
NORTH AMERICAN FOCOLARE DAY
with
CHIARA LUBICH

Foundress of the Focolare Movement

May 29, 1983
10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

For free admission tickets and further information, write to:

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P. O. Box 496
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the felt forum

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THE COUNCIL

twenty years later

On October 11, 1962, in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Pope John XXIII inaugurated the Second Vatican Council which was to substantially renew the face of the Church and offer new perspectives for her presence in the world.

On the twentieth anniversary of that historical event, we asked several leaders of the religious and lay world, to tell us which contribution of the Council has had the greatest impact, in their opinion.



NIKKYO NIWANO,
Buddhist

*"Collaboration for peace
among all religions."*

I was invited to Vatican II in September 1965, as an observer. As a Buddhist, and in accordance with the teaching of the Holy Scripture Hohekyo (Lotus Sutra) in which I believe, I felt that I should contribute to the effort of all religions toward world peace. I was firmly convinced that in times like these, when narrow nationalism seems to give way to a wider international and global vision, various religions should not withdraw into their own world of defense and isolation and ignore any contact or relationship with one another.

It was, therefore, with real joy that I welcomed the invitation of the Holy See. What particularly impressed me was the fact that the Holy Father, Paul VI, would so strongly proclaim the idea of ecumenism. Also, during my personal meeting with the Pope (I still have a vivid recollection of it), he told me, "Now is the time when the words 'humanity' and 'neighbor' take on the same meaning. All religions must cooperate to achieve peace in the world."

There is a saying which goes, "Seeing something once with your own eyes is worth more than hearing about it a hundred times." I can now say that having participated in the Council made all my earlier doubts about



Nikkyo Niwano, founder and president of the Japanese movement of Buddhist renewal known as the Rissho Kosei-kai, and promoter of the World Conference for Religion and Peace.

the Catholic Church disappear at once. In a certain sense, my vision of what religion should be was strengthened. I am not overstating my point when I say that it was this particular occasion which prompted me to reach a decision: "Why not gather the representatives of all religions around a table in order to talk about peace and about working for it together?"

It was this idea that gave me the impulse to work at what later became the World Conference for Religion and Peace, as well as the Asian Conference for Religion and Peace. There is no doubt that Vatican II inspired me, a Buddhist, to devote myself to the advancement of collabora-

tion among religions, and to work for peace. For me, the Council was an unforgettable event and a great source of strength in religious life.

DOLORES LECKEY
Executive Director of the
Bishop's Committee
for the Laity,
National Conference of
Catholic Bishops—U.S.A.

"Shared responsibility"

In my opinion the most important contribution of the Council is the development and surge of unity in many ways. Particularly I am struck by what has happened in twenty years among all Christian Churches. My hope is that this momentum will continue in small and big ways. Then the pastoral care of the world can be much stronger, fuller, richer, deeper. The fact that the cities, during the sixties, in so many parts of the United States, were cared for by coalitions of Churches was a demonstration of the new-found bond with each other.

This kind of sharing of responsibilities for the care of the world that we see developing in the Churches, has been seen within the Catholic communion, especially in the development of shared responsibility between the clergy and the laity. This was another aspect of unity, this kind of affirmation of lay people as authentically Church. I think the

growth of lay movements, like the Focolare, the Cursillo and others, enables people to develop a new kind of awareness of the lay vocation in the world, an awareness of the Christian presence as a transforming presence; that is, that the world is a 'graced' place and not something to be afraid of.

IGNATIUS M. PHAKOE,
Bishop of Leribe in
Lesotho, South Africa

*"The Church
as the People of God"*

I believe that the Council's most important message for both the universal and the local Church is its definition of the Church as the people of God. The Church,



Bishop Ignatius M. Phakoe, of Leribe in Lesotho, South Africa.

Body of Christ, is seen not only in her role of leadership, but also in her members—the people who must grow in the life of Christ by the inspiration received from

the Holy Spirit, by nourishment received from the teachings of the Holy Scripture, by active participation in the divine liturgy and, in a particular way, by the celebration of the Eucharist. The people of God make up the universal Church, of which the local Church is a part.

On my return to Africa, after having attended the Council, I tried to communicate these ideas about the people of God to my own congregation. It wasn't easy, because they tended to think of the Church as the one in Rome where the Pope is. It was hard for them to see themselves as part of the universal Church, and to recognize that, therefore, they too were Church.

ROSEMARY GOLDIE

"Mystery of communion"

It is not easy to choose one particular aspect of Vatican II. The teaching of the council is one entity, and the most fundamental aspect of it may not be the one that appears to be most incisive. The source of everything is the Word of God (*Dei Verbum*), and its most visible and operative aspect is liturgical reform.

We need but one moment of reflection to see that the central aspect — as from the Word of God and expressed in the liturgy — is the renewed image of the Church, the image which has been opened wide to include the hope for ecumenism and for a new concept of the missionary vocation.

It has by now become a cliché to talk about a reversed pyramid indicating a new image of the Church which had formerly been understood too exclusively in

terms of its hierarchy. Its restructuring as elaborated in *De Ecclesia*, where the chapter on the people of God is given priority over the one on the hierarchy, has been hailed by many — perhaps with excessive enthusiasm — as a kind of pro-



Rosemary Goldie of Australia; vice-president of the Pastoral Institute of Lateran University, formerly auditor at Vatican II, and presently consultant of the Council for the Laity in Rome.

motion of the laity. This has also been said in reference to the vision of the Church in our contemporary world as expressed in *Gaudium et Spes*. Later, this new self-image of the Church was interpreted by some in a way which gave too much emphasis to its "democratic" and "secular" aspects.

Yet it seems to me that the true image of the Church emerging more and more clearly from the Council is that of a mystery of communion, a people assembled in the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the "people of God walking along the pathways of humanity."

CHIARA LUBICH

"The Council of Unity"

Beyond and despite the painful signs that seem to contradict it, there is, today in the world, a great thrust toward unity. And perhaps the most powerful voice which was raised in support of this goal has come from the Second Vatican Council, from the Holy Spirit in Vatican II. Among the many contributions made by that great assembly, the most weighty, in fact, the one that most forcefully influenced all Christians, was the Council's "dominant motive," the motive underlying every facet of its decrees and constitutions, namely, the Church seen as communion the reiterated emphasis placed on the presence of Christ among those united in his name; the Eucharist reaffirmed as a bond of unity, the preeminence of love.

Even collegiality, on one hand, and the reaffirmation of the function of lay people in the Church and in society, on the other, are two poles of this vision of the people of God walking toward an always deeper unity in Christ, and of humanity as a unitarian reality with a common goal, with Christ as the point of reference and final purpose.

In light of the great prayer of Jesus, "that all may be one, as you and I are one," the ecumenical discourse, with its hitherto unthinkable development into dialogue, has also come into full relief.

Vatican II could, in fact be defined as the Council of dialogue. The openness it suggested does not mean in any way letting go of the truths of

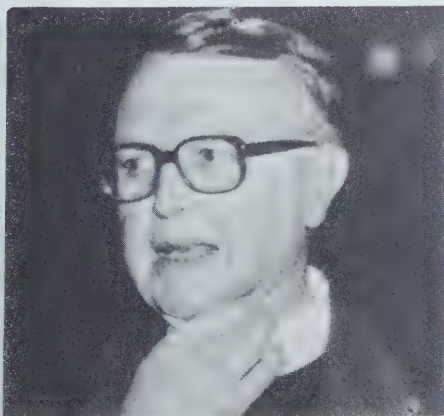
our faith, but rather a new understanding of other Churches and ecclesial communities, the possibility of comparing the valuable elements that each Christian tradition has tried to preserve, a re-discovery of that which already unites all Christians.

Together with the dialogue among Christians we find another wide-reaching element: the vaster dialogue with the faithful of the great religions, and the even wider universal one with all people of good will including the non-believers, which has opened new possibilities for the Church's evangelizing mission.

Looking at the Council twenty years after its beginning, one can see very clearly that this great celebration of our Church was truly inspired to give a soul to today's humanity which, despite all the contrasts within it, has a strong and sometimes desperate drive towards unity. Thus, acting to implement the Council's decisions means expediting humanity's move toward oneness; it means bringing to today's world longing for unity the presence of Christ, the Risen Lord. Even to this day, he keeps his promise to be among his own and thus gives us the possibility of really building this unity on rock, and widening it to the dimension of eternity, for which mankind is made.

C.L.

Excerpt from an interview with the *Roman Observer*, on the twentieth anniversary of Vatican II.



MAX THURIAN, of Taizé

"Liturgical reform"

The accomplishment that I feel had the greatest impact within and, for its ecumenical implications, also outside the Catholic Church, was the liturgical reform. It is certainly true that,

Fr. Max Thurian of Switzerland, a theologian and member of the Taizé Brotherhood.

thanks to the liturgical reform, a spiritual change of wide reaching range has taken place in the Catholic Church. It is enough to think of the place given to the Sacred Scripture in the Mass, in the Holy Office, and so on. Also on the theological level, the words of the encyclical *Dei Verbum* on Holy Scripture in relation to tradition, have been decisive for ecumenism, and so has the text of the encyclical on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*.



The fullness of joy

The fullness of joy
is the fruit of Christianity
when it is lived
as Christ has taught it:
joy even in sorrow,
joy that flowers from suffering,
from sacrificing one's self,
one's own views,
one's own personal will,
one's own ego,
so as to leave room for God,
for his plans,
for his wise
and radiant plans for the world
and for each one of us.

CHIARA LUBICH

—An experience of “koinonia”—

Forty-five bishops, friends of the Focolare Movement, met at the Mariapolis Center in Rocca di Papa, Italy and also visited Loppiano.

by Antonio Petrilli

Among the many gatherings held at the Mariapolis Center of the Focolare Movement in Rocca di Papa, Italy, a very special one was certainly that of the bishops who are friends of the Movement. They have been coming every year since 1977, and these meetings have provided an opportunity for them to share a particular experience in collegiality.

The Focolare Movement is present in 146 nations and in over 1,000 dioceses. For this reason many bishops have come in contact with the Movement and appreciate its activities. These annual meetings are,

therefore, an expression of their desire to meet together in one of the centers of the Movement in order to become better acquainted with its goals, its development and its spirituality.

Bishops, however, are very busy. They have commitments in their own dioceses, with the Episcopal Conferences of their

On Wednesday, January 25, the bishops attended the Pope's general audience in the Vatican's Paul VI Hall. Here we see the Pope in conversation with Archbishop Cesare Zacchi, President of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy.



countries and responsibility for a multiplicity of events. This makes it impossible for those who would like to participate in these gatherings to be present. For this reason it is not always the same bishops who meet every year. At one time the participation of the bishops of Asia would be more prevalent, at another time Africa or Europe would prevail. This year particularly noticeable was the presence of the bishops from Latin America. Seventeen of the forty-five present were coming from Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Colombia.

A characteristic of this year was not only internationality (seventeen countries were represented) but also the diversity in the responsibility and commitments of the bishops present. There were titular bishops, auxiliary bishops, apostolic delegates and bishops in congregations and committees of the Roman Curia.

The meeting lasted from January 23rd to the 29th, and there was ample opportunity for the bishops to get to know one another and be deeply enriched by the sharing — embracing the life of the entire Church.

Bishop Klaus Hemmerle (Aachen, West Germany) who sponsored the gathering and Bishop Acacio Rodrigues Alves (Palmares, Brazil) dealt with the fundamental points of the spirituality of the Focolare

Some of the bishops during one of the talks at the convention. From left to right: Bishop Acacio Rodrigues Alves, Bishop Frederico Didonet, Bishop Lessa, Brazil; Bishop Dante Sandrelli, Argentina; Archbishop William Carew, Apostolic Delegate in Jerusalem; Archbishop Paolo Karatas, Bishop Gauthier Pierre Dubois, Turkey; Bishop Hakim, Egypt.





LEFT: Archbishop Moreira Neves, (center) Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops, with Chiara Lubich, who spoke on the theme "Jesus Crucified and Forsaken, Key to Unity." At the right, Bishop Hakim of Sahag, Egypt.

BELOW: Cardinal Opilio Rossi, (right) president of the Council for the Laity, presided over the convention. Here he is talking with Bishop Gauthier Pierre Dubois, Apostolic Vicar of Istanbul.



through a number of meditations. The theme was then deepened through dialogue and talks of different bishops.

Miss Chiara Lubich, foundress and president of the Movement, was invited to speak about "Jesus Crucified and Forsaken, Key to Unity." She also answered some questions on the spirituality of the Movement.

An addition to the program this year was the visit to the little city of Loppiano near Florence. In Loppiano people representing all the vocations in the different branches within the Movement are present. Through the sharing of experiences of work and communion the bishops had an opportunity to see how the points of the spirituality can be put into practice by people of different walks of life.

And for Loppiano the bishop's visit was also something new and exciting. The inhabitants of the little city had never welcomed such a numerous group of bishops who, through their unity, bear witness to that ideal of Jesus which is also the specific

Moments during the bishop's visit to Loppiano. RIGHT: In the ceramics workshop of Centro Ave. BELOW RIGHT: At the carpentry exhibition at Centro Azur.



aim of the Focolare Movement and of the Loppiano Mariapolis.

On the 26th of January, at the general audience, the Holy Father greeted the bishops and thanked them "with particular cordiality" for their presence. "I am deeply grateful," he said, "for your spontaneous gesture. I see in it a witness to a communion which gives me sincere comfort. Everything which promotes communion among us is certainly in tune with the will of Christ, who remains the Supreme Shepherd of the Church which was born from his redeeming sacrifice. If we are united to him as to the one Lord of our minds and hearts, how could we be divided from one another? May this gathering be useful in deepening and consolidating the bonds of mutual charity binding us together so that this experience of 'koinonia' that you are living today may have a positive influence on the local Churches entrusted to your care. May it give life in them to an always deeper sense of belonging to the one mystical Body of Christ."



WORD OF LIFE

The word makes us live.

The word makes us free.

*The word
guarantees happiness.*

The word converts.

The word purifies us.

*The word draws us to our
specific vocations.*

*The word brings forth the
hatred of the world and the
sanctity of the disciple.*

*The word makes us see
the truth.*

The word brings comfort.

The word gives us joy.

The word produces works.

The word gives wisdom.

*The word preserves us
from human concerns.*

The word obtains everything.

*The word brings about
union with God.*

*The word gives us hope
of eternal life.*

The word makes us one.

*The word changes one's
mentality.*

*The word makes each soul
a heaven.*

**"Obedience to God comes before
obedience to men" (Acts 5:29).**

The apostles, who had been working signs and wonders, were thrown into prison. But, they were set free by an angel and went out and began preaching again in the temple.

Meanwhile the high priest had convened the Sanhedrin and sent officials to the jail with instructions to bring the apostles to him. When the officials arrived they found the prison empty and reported back. Later, when the apostles were found preaching, and were brought before the Sanhedrin, the high priest demanded an explanation, saying: "We gave you a formal warning not to preach in this name." In reply Peter and the apostles said:

**"Obedience to God comes before
obedience to men."**

These words teach us that there is an obedience owed to God and to his Spirit which takes precedence over the obedience owed to human authority, however legitimate such authority might be.

This means that sometimes the individual has to make a choice. And this is true even today. It could concern special situations believers may encounter. For instance, we have the typical case of those who, following their conscience — and I mean a conscience that has been purified,

and thus is better able to distinguish between God's desires and one's personal inclinations — have come to the conclusion that God is calling them to serve him in a particular vocation such as the priesthood or one of the many forms of religious life.

Even if their choice were contrary to their parents' opinion, they would have to repeat:

**"Obedience to God comes before
obedience to men."**

However Peter's statement applies to all Christians. They are called to live their principles to the full, in an authentic way, in the midst of the world. And they must do so even if others, particularly those in positions of authority over them do not want them to.

Christians, as such, are called to love everyone without exception, without partiality or discrimination. For instance they would have to resist the demands of any society or state which would want to impose a mode of behavior which is contrary to a Christian conscience. Thus, at times, courage is needed to go against the stream, to react against whatever violates human rights.

There are many different situations which could arise in which the Christian must answer as the apostles did. If, for example, the law were to require physicians to take human life, either by abor-

EXPERIENCES

tion or by any of the various forms of euthanasia, the Christian doctor would have to refuse, and obey God rather than human authority.

Another example is the so-called "total war" causing immense and indiscriminate destruction which goes beyond the limits of legitimate defense. The Church condemns it and if human authorities were to order such action, Christians could not obey. Likewise, if Christians should discover that they are involved in a war of aggression, they would have to refuse to take part, because . . .

"Obedience to God comes before obedience to men."

How then can we live this word of life?

We must, first of all, make a determined effort to see that goodness prevails in all the small everyday circumstances of our lives. We must see to it that our hearts remain untouched by the harmful influence of a double-standard attitude. Wherever there is a tendency to give first place to financial gain, self-interest and personal prestige, we must remain true to our Christian principles.

We must always obey God first, then human authority. And by doing so, we will help others to do the same.

Chiara Lubich

THE MAIN THING

The week had gone badly: hectic, and yes, in the process I forgot the main thing — to continue to love everyone. One day I realized my youngest son was talking back and he also was rather angrily commenting that I never listened to him. He was almost at the point of tears.

This was not normal for him and I wondered what had happened. Then I knew: worldly pressures and concern about my health had gotten the best of me again.

My normal response to him that week had been, "Do this." "Don't do that." "Why are you doing that?" Love — the important ingredient — was missing.

I thought of the word of life "Make ready the way of the Lord, clear him a straight path" (Lk. 3:4). I knew I had failed and so immediately I changed my attitude.

I went to my son and with love and a big smile I asked him if he would clear the table which was still filled with dirty dishes. His response, as he sat in the chair was, "I told Rita I was going to help her." This I knew was true as I had heard him earlier say it. So I just smiled and said O.K.

Two minutes later I walked into the kitchen. The table was cleared. He had felt my love and had sneaked into the kitchen, and there he stood with a big grin.

B.B.

MY SON IS ALSO MY NEIGHBOR

My seven-year-son has never been very religious and little by little he has been refusing to pray, at least when we are together.

When I read the word of life "For the weak I made myself weak. I made myself all things to all men in order to save some at any cost" (1 Cor. 9:22) and its commentary, I thought of my son. It was clear to me that I had tried very little to "make myself one" with him and I knew that now was the time to begin.

I earnestly tried to become interested in his interests — games with monsters, racing cars, balls and the deep sea world of diving, crabs, shore and underwater animals. It wasn't always easy, but I kept on.

Then one evening, as I left his room after putting him to bed and turning out the light, he called after me and asked, "Aren't you going to listen to my prayers?"

One day soon after this, my son and I were in the kitchen. I was preparing dinner and he was ready to eat a snack. As I glanced at him (he didn't know I was looking) I noticed him raise the spoon to his mouth, then put it down, quickly say a prayer of thanks, and then begin to eat. (Our family always prays before meals but lately he very reluctantly — if at all — had joined in.)

Several days have now passed and my son is "still praying." I know that sincerely trying to make myself "one" with him will have to always continue and it will always be a constant effort. But I've seen it's the way to love my neighbor who in this case is also my son.

L.C.

THE PHONE CALLS

I had started out the day with the intention of living the word of life as best I could: "Go; your faith has saved you" (Mk. 10:52).

There were many phone calls to make, and my plan was to remember, before I dialed the number, who it was that I would be calling: Jesus. Therefore, I was going to try to make my words an act of love for that person on the line.

Everything was going well. The people with whom I spoke were very receptive — love seemed to be responding to love. It was easy.

Finally I dialed the last number. Perhaps I was a little tired; perhaps my intention was not as strong as in the beginning; then, too, perhaps the person at the other end was suffering, even in a small way. Whatever it was, there was a definite tension in our conversation. There was also a tiny temptation in me to react to her coldness. But I found, in spite of myself, the desire to be patient with her, to give her the opportunity to love me by suggesting a few alternatives regarding our transaction.

Little by little the atmosphere changed; so much so that she began to suggest ideas of her own. In the end, her last words to me were, "I'll be happy to

check other sources and send the information to you."

T.Z.

MY HOMILY PREPARATION

Recently I was asked to visit a needy migrant family. I really wanted to postpone this since I was pressed for time due to a novena of Our Lady I was preaching. Believing it would take but an hour or so, I went at 11:00 a.m. I discovered two families in a shack with ten children, three of them sick. I immediately took them to a family clinic, only to be told to return at 1:00 p.m.

When we returned, the line was quite long and it was 3:00 p.m. when the doctor finally got to us. Becoming quite annoyed and tense, I picked up my copy of *Living City* and read about a girl in a similar situation who had lovingly lived in the present moment.

Then and there I decided to change my attitude and my plans, buying goodies for the hungry children and smiling at the busy attendants.

When the doctor finished at 4:30 p.m. I was tempted to take them straight home, but I remembered that I had to love them more. So I got their five prescriptions filled, their groceries bought . . . and no time for my homily preparation!

The hundredfold came when I delivered my talk without the usual nervousness, and my thoughts flowed out very naturally.

Fr. L. S., O.S.J.

OUR SUMMER COTTAGE

My husband and I have been building a cottage, but for the

last two months there have been some problems.

First of all my husband works at a shop where he can't use the phone so I have been doing most of the communicating between ourselves and the supplier and the builder.

Sometimes when he came home he wasn't pleased with the way I had handled something. For instance, I ordered an eight foot glass door and it should have been six feet. He was a little discouraged when I had to tell him that the material was not at the site and the piers were not in. He was getting anxious since the bad weather would soon be here and the road leading to the lake would not be safe. As a result, he was annoyed with me and I was annoyed with him and the children could see this. Their needs were not being met because this cottage business was a thorn in our sides.

At a certain moment I realized I was not living the Gospel; that I had put the worry about the cottage and the way things were going ahead of the love for my husband and children. I wanted to change my attitude right away and start to love them in all the small opportunities that came my way.

I really tried to listen to my husband's concerns and offer some positive advice. He was concerned with what was happening up at the lake so I suggested we drop what we had to do and go see for ourselves. It turned out to be a nice family outing.

The atmosphere at home has really changed. Love has helped smooth over some difficult moments, and as it turns out, the cottage is going up bit by bit.

R.H.

"Whoever knows how to die in all
will have life in all."

St. John of the Cross



FAMILY LIFE

OUR THIRD CHILD

I was pregnant and overdue with my third child so my obstetrician sent me to the hospital for testing every other day to make sure the baby was O.K. There they do an electrocardiogram to monitor the baby's heart beat. I had been twice for the test, so I'd become familiar with the procedures, terminology and graphs.

The third time I went was early on a Monday morning when I was exactly 2 weeks past my due date. After a few minutes of monitoring, the machine started going haywire. The nurse technician came running and started to try to find the baby's heartbeat with the stethoscope that's hooked up to the machine. Usually it's just fastened around your waist with a belt, but the baby was moving around so much that she couldn't get a good reading when she used the belt. So she held the stethoscope to my abdomen herself. That way, when the baby moved, she could try to "follow it" and monitor the heartbeat.

The problem was that with each movement the baby's heartbeat was dipping very low. I could tell by her face that the nurse was worried. After a couple of minutes, she called to a receptionist across the hall to get the doctors in there right away. In the meantime, the nurse con-

tinued to hold the stethoscope on me and track the baby's heartbeat. We could see the numbers on the monitor show the heartbeats. Her hands were trembling, and everytime the monitor would show the heartrate dip to "0," she would quickly find it again and then tell me: "I've got it, I've found your baby's heartbeat, it's there!" The more she tried to reassure me, the more I realized how serious the situation was. Then we'd watch the heartrate numbers slowly climb up again. I felt really scared — I was afraid to move because somehow it might cause the baby to move and his heartbeat to drop again.

After the obstetrician came, I mentioned that I was supposed to go see my own doctor after the test. She said that she didn't think I'd be even crossing the street that day. She and some other doctors examined the graphs and charts that the monitor had made to see what had been happening. They told me that they were calling my doctor and that he would probably come to deliver the baby right away.

I knew I had to live the present moment really well — to trust in God, to keep him first in my life, to accept whatever happened as his love.

I knew there was a real possibility of losing the baby and I

was afraid. I felt that God wanted my total "yes" to his will — not a "yes God, I'll love you if you let the baby live," which would have been like bargaining out of desperation; but a "yes God, I accept whatever happens as your love for me, as your will."

I knew then that if we lost the baby there would be tremendous pain and suffering, but there would not be a sense of abandonment by God. Even if I lost the baby, he would be there present, loving me. It was clear that for me the key was to love him — in his greatest suffering, when he had felt abandoned. I felt sure that in loving Jesus Crucified and Forsaken I would find peace and joy.

In that moment, I said a deep "yes" to God's will — whatever it might be. And then, right away, I felt a tremendous peace.

This helped me then to love all the people who were around me — the nurses and doctors and my husband when I called him to come to the hospital.

He told me that he had called all our friends and they were all praying. I felt stronger, surrounded by a loving community.

That whole day was very difficult. Throughout labor there was constant concern by the doc-

(Continued on page 26)

Making ourselves "one"

My mother, aged seventy-eight, is a very strong and active woman who keeps herself up both physically and mentally. She belongs to a group of amateur actors (she was an actress for many years).

From the time that I became a part of the Focolare Movement (about twenty-one years ago), she gave me no peace. She kept saying that she didn't understand, and I would repeat that I didn't understand why she didn't understand. How many times we parted with bitterness in our souls!

A few months ago my mother, who lives in Europe, wrote that she wanted to come to visit me where I live in a Focolare¹ center. We had not seen each other for quite a long time, and so we were anxious to see one another again. This time, I understood that if I really wanted to love her, I had to leave her absolutely free!

I should say though that during all those years of our separation there was a period of "brightness" in my mother's relationship with the Movement. For about fifteen days a very dear friend of mine had spent her vacation resting in my mom's home near the sea. Some time later I asked my friend what she had done or said to win my mom's affection. She simply answered that they had read together from a humorous book for children, that they had gone for walks, and just rested.

I understood instantly! The answer was not to preach to her! I had to make myself one with my mother and love her as she wanted to be loved without trying to win her over to my ideal.

Mama arrived during one of the months when we have the most activities: the planning of youth days and children's afternoons and the mailing of invitations to thousands of people who attend

the Mariapolis, our large summer convention. Since my mom does not speak the language of my new country, she could not be left on her own. She always needed someone to accompany her.

On the day before the afternoon planned for the children, my companions were busy making all the necessary preparations. My mom, who had now been with us several days, wanted to go shopping for gifts to take back home. She and I went to the shopping center. We entered a large department store where we bought many different things. The more she saw, though, the more enthusiastic she became, and the more she wanted to look around in another large department store. An hour passed, then two, then three! I wanted to tell her, "Enough for today . . ." But then it seemed more charitable for me to put aside my desire to run home, and instead interest myself in every little thing that she wanted to take back to her grandchildren. So we arrived home very late. We were both extremely tired, but Mom was radiant. At dinner she recounted many things about her childhood, about her dreams of becoming a great artist.

A few days later she told me that she wanted to spend a quiet evening alone with me. After dinner I took her on a tour of the city; we went to see the skyscrapers, the business center, and then, recalling her love of the theater, I took her to the most beautiful of the theaters. As we started home, she was silent for a while. Then, she began to talk, half to herself, "How do you make it? How do all of you make it to be so peaceful and happy all the time?"

I was shocked for a moment. Was that really my mom asking

that question? Then she continued, "You see, I got married; I reared a beautiful family, but I don't feel peaceful; I am never certain of having done the will of God!"

I felt that it was just the right moment to speak to her about the love of God, and in particular, about the highest expression of his love for us: Jesus who on the cross cried, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Mom listened with her soul completely open, eager to know more and more. She said, "How I envy all of you! For such a long time I never agreed with you, but in reality I know it was jealousy, jealousy of your new family. But now I know, after having spent this time with all of you, that I have nothing to fear. This family of yours can also be mine; all it takes is for me to want it."

From then on not a day passed without my Mom asking us something more about our life. Then she asked if she could help us. She made cookies for the children who come to our meetings; she helped us mail the invitations to the Mariapolis.

One evening she received an invitation to have dinner with a family friend. She and I started getting ready to leave, but when the moment came to go, she said to us all, "I'd much rather stay here with you . . . with Jesus in our midst."

Every day brought a new surprise, until the very last day when she was packing her suitcases. She told me, "I am going, but we are not leaving each other. Now I will continue to receive Jesus in the Eucharist every day, just as I have been doing here with you, and in him we will always find each other."

J.P.

1) See inside back cover.

(Continued from page 24)

tor and nurses because the baby's heartbeat dipped so much with each contraction. In the end everything turned out well. For my husband and me it was a beautiful experience. We always experienced peace because we tried to keep Jesus in our midst through our mutual love. All our friends who had shared our pain, shared then in our joy, thus making it fuller.

R.B.

"I'LL WEAR WHAT YOU SAID"

In the morning before going to work I take my two children to nursery school. One particular morning my older child was rather tired and cranky and she was refusing to wear what I had chosen for her. Since I was already behind schedule I got up-tight and started to impose on

her my choice of clothing. This made the situation even worse.

At one point I realized that I was not loving her; that my only concern was to get to work on time. I knew that I had to change my attitude and re-establish the unity between us. As soon as I calmed down she also calmed down. After a few moments of silence my daughter looked at me and said, "You know Daddy, I think I'm going to wear what you said."

V.L.

THE COUNTDOWN

One Saturday morning I was leaving to attend a course. I started the car and parked it outside the garage while I went into the house to get a pencil. When I stepped out again, I saw the car slowly moving down the driveway, across the street and

into a ditch of snow in front of our neighbor's lawn. I couldn't believe my eyes!

I was thankful that no one had been going by. I tried to drive the car out of the snow bank, but this was to no avail. My next plan was to get my wife's car and try to pull it out. This didn't work either because the rope broke. My class started at 9:00 o'clock and it was getting late. I started to feel frustrated. Part of the car was in the middle of the road and my watch was ticking away the time. But I tried to keep in mind that what mattered was to live in the present moment and to do everything well. Soon my father-in-law came out with shovels and a thicker, heavier rope. After trying many more times to pull the car out, we finally succeeded. I was so glad I had not lost my



patience and it turned out that I was only fifteen minutes late for my class.

V.L.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LOVING

My father is in his eighties now, and one day he wanted to help me put up some molding around the kitchen ceiling. As he began to cut the pieces, I realized that he was holding the wood at the wrong angle: the molding would not fit properly when we were ready to nail it to the walls. Several times I tried to explain that perhaps we were not cutting it correctly but I soon realized that he would take it as an insult. I remembered that it was more important to love than to have the job done perfectly. He continued to level the pieces of wood, somehow managing to force the pieces to fit. I could see how important it was for him to feel useful and productive, even though it might cost us about thirty dollars to replace some of the molding. We got it all done and it looked presentable although obviously illfitted.

Since it was my sister's kitchen, and thirty dollars, it was a little more difficult for her to accept, but we had established the importance of loving our father before all else, and there was a sense of peace in the family.

The following week, my nephew decided to buy and recut the molding, realizing that my father would not notice the repair. It was really a surprise to discover that we did not have to replace any of the wood because the kitchen walls were of graduated sizes and it was simply a matter of recutting and switching the larger moldings to the next smallest size wall. It struck me to experience, also in this, the love of God.

R. R.

The ⑤ Mariapolises of next summer will be the following:

SOUTHWEST:

New Mexico Highlands University
Las Vegas, New Mexico

June 26, after supper — July 2, after breakfast

MIDWEST:

University of Wisconsin
Plattville, Wisconsin

July 3, after supper — July 9, after breakfast

NORTHWEST:

Western Washington University
Bellingham, Washington

July 10, after supper — July 16, after breakfast

CARIBBEAN: (in Spanish)

Manresa Loyola
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

July 13, after lunch — July 17, after lunch

ATTENTION! ATTENTION! ATTENTION! CHANGE!

EAST COAST:

**PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING
IMPORTANT CHANGE:**

THE EAST COAST MARIAPOLIS WILL BE HELD
AT FORDHAM UNIVERSITY, BRONX, NEW YORK.

THE DATES OF THE MARIAPOLIS HAVE
ALSO CHANGED AS FOLLOWS:

AUGUST 8, after supper — AUGUST 14, after breakfast

The very young and the Gospel

I gave my sister a piece of candy to love her.

Katrina
5 years old

My Dad went to Cincinnati and he got my little sister a dress, and he didn't get one for me, but I didn't complain.

Christina
7 years old

I did the dishes with my mom because I'm a gen.

Joyce
7 years old

I wanted to love my sister so I let her ride my bike.

Katie
6 years old

I didn't want to get washed, but I did it to love my mom.

Teresa
5 years old

When I try to be a gen I always let my sister ride my Big Wheel even when I want to ride it myself.

Heather
7 years old

Last night my sister wanted to use my shawl as a pillow and so I let her. The I got the hundredfold because she gave it back to me.

Christina
7 years old

I didn't want Rebecca to wear one of my dresses even though it fitted her and it didn't fit me anymore, but then I let her wear it anyway because it was love.

Maggie
6 years old

I loved my baby sister by singing to her when she got cranky.

Maggie
6 years old

When were at my grandmother's house, my Daddy told me that we had to go home. I wanted to stay, and so I was going to complain out loud but I didn't do it to love him.

Teresa
5 years old

Today I didn't want to play house with my Dad because I was mad, but I did it to love him.

Christina
7 years old



What is the Focolare Movement?

THE BEGINNINGS

FOCOLARE means "hearth," "family fireside." What first strikes people when they come in contact with members of the Focolare, whether in small groups or in large gatherings, is the atmosphere of a family. It is a family formed by many different people in various walks of life. The Focolare Movement is also known as the "Work of Mary." Under this name it was approved by Pope John XXIII in 1962.

The Focolare Movement began in 1943 in Italy. In the midst of the terrible destruction of World War II, Chiara Lubich realized that God is the only one worth living for. As a result, she began to center her life on the Gospel, together with a small group of young women who followed her. Their ideal became one of striving toward the fulfillment of Jesus' last prayer to the Father: "May they all be one" (Jn.17:21).

The life of Chiara and her first companions, and the spiritual way they spontaneously followed, gave rise to the unique form of spirituality of the Focolare Movement, a spirituality of unity. It has proved to be a powerful means of introducing the Gospel into modern life, of going to God together.

WHO ARE THE FOCOLARINI

Single men and women live in separate communities called Focolare Centers. Their principal aim is to achieve unity among themselves through mutual charity practiced twenty-four hours a day. They follow the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. They work as other laymen and women in regular jobs and professions.

Some married persons, even though continuing to live in their families, participate fully in the life of either the men's or women's Focolare Centers in their common effort to achieve this same unity. They are called "Married Focolarini" and form the backbone of a vast Movement within the Movement, called the New Family Movement.

THE VOLUNTEERS AND THE NEW HUMANITY MOVEMENT

The Volunteers, also called the "Volunteers of God," are a large group within the Focolare Movement; they would like to transform all human realities according to the Gospel spirit. The Volunteers are the backbone of the mass movement called New Humanity. The aim of this Movement is to help form a society made of men and women who are made "new" by the Gospel message and who can then bring new life to all fields of human activity (education, business, etc.). This results in new social relationships which, in turn, lead to the realization of new structures of society.

GEN

The new generations of the Focolare Movement form another Movement or, better, three movements: the Gen 2, the Gen 3 and the Gen 4 Movements, divided according to their various age groups. "Gen" stands for new generation. The Gen have committed themselves to living the Gospel message of love and to sharing with other youth the conviction they have that the Gospel is the answer to every question and the motive for everything they do.

THE MOVEMENT AMONG THE RELIGIOUS

Men and women religious — although they live according to their own rules and constitutions and are already a distinct part of the Church through their religious families — can also be associated with the Focolare.

Contact with the Movement helps them to focus their attention on the specific charism of their founders, and to see how it can be lived in the present time.

PRIESTS — PRIESTS' MOVEMENT — SEMINARIANS — PARISH MOVEMENT

Many diocesan priests are committed to living the spirituality of the Focolare Movement. Some of them live in community. They form the backbone of the Priests' Movement which is made up of priests who live the spirituality of unity.

FOCOLARE FAMILY

The largest group within the Focolare Movement is made up of men, women and young people who are connected with the Movement without having any formal ties with it. Their bond of unity stems from their acceptance of its spirit and their desire to live it.

ECUMENISM

The Movement not only crossed the political boundaries of more than 100 countries, it has also gone beyond the barriers erected for centuries between the various Christian Churches.

Ecumenical activities take place in the different parts of the world where the Movement exists.

In the past few years a promising, ongoing dialogue has been established with faithful of other religions.

SUMMER MARIAPOLIS

Summer meetings are held every year for those interested in the Movement and for those who wish to come into contact with it. For one week persons of all ages and walks of life are exposed to the spirituality of unity. Above all, they strive to practice it by creating among themselves a rapport that molds them into a community. It is intended to be a basic experience of such intense unity that the people will be able to bring it back into their own environments. And this is the most striking fruit of these conventions. They tend to be models of a world which lives according to the Gospel.

PERMANENT MARIAPOLIS

The need to prolong the experience of the summer meetings brought about the birth of small cities called Permanent Mariapolis. They are made up of young men and women, as well as whole families, who are there for a designated period of time to be formed according to the Gospel spirit of unity.

They also attend classes in Sacred Scripture, Theology and Sociology and work for their own support.

MARIAPOLIS CENTERS

In addition to the Permanent Mariapolis, there are Mariapolis Centers, which are training centers for the members of the Movement.

FOCOLARE ADDRESSES IN NORTH AMERICA

CHICAGO:
P.O. Box 53426
Chicago, IL 60653

SAN ANTONIO:
P.O. Box 32302
San Antonio, TX 78216

NEW YORK:
P.O. Box 496
New York, NY 10021

BOSTON:
P.O. Box 239
Roslindale, MA 02131

WASHINGTON, DC:
P.O. Box 4958
Washington, DC 20008

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